

NOTICE: This order was filed under Supreme Court Rule 23 and may not be cited as precedent by any party except in the limited circumstances allowed under Rule 23(e)(1).

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS
FIRST DISTRICT

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	)	Appeal from the
	)	Circuit Court of
Plaintiff-Appellee,	)	Cook County.
	)	
v.	)	No. 25 CR 03294 01
	)	
JODALE FORD,	)	The Honorable
	)	James Michael Obbish
Defendant-Appellant.	)	Judge, presiding.

JUSTICE HYMAN delivered the judgment of the court.
Presiding Justice Gamrath and Justice Pucinski concurred in the judgment.

Order

¶ 1 *Held:* Affirmed. The circuit court properly found that pretrial detention was necessary.

¶ 2 Jodale Ford appeals the denial of his motion for relief from pretrial detention under section 110-6.1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963 (725 ILCS 5/110-6.1 (West 2022)), as amended by Public Acts 101-652, § 10-255, and 102-1104, § 70 (eff. Jan. 1, 2023), commonly known as the Pretrial Fairness Act (Act). We affirm because circumstantial evidence tied Ford to the crimes, and his criminal history supported detention.

¶ 3

Background

¶ 4 The State petitioned to detain Jodale Ford, who, along with three others, allegedly robbed, battered, hijacked, and kidnapped two people at gunpoint.

¶ 5 The State proffered that, in August 2024, four men traveling in two cars parked behind a Porsche just as its driver and passenger entered a garage. Three of the men wore masks; one did not. Two of the men held guns while the driver and the passenger were robbed of their cash and other items. One of the men broke the passenger's nose, slammed her head against the wall, and stomped on her back. The men zip-tied the driver's and passenger's hands and put them back into the Porsche. They drove away from the garage in all three cars.

¶ 6 As they drove down a nearby alley, the driver freed himself from his zip ties and managed to escape. Two of the men caught, pistol-whipped, and forced him into a different car. As the cars continued, the driver escaped again and ran to a family member's home, where he called the police. Sometime later, the passenger likewise escaped but remained on the roadside, suffering severe road rash. A passerby called 911. Several hours later, officers found the Porsche, which had been set on fire.

¶ 7 Officers recovered surveillance footage of the kidnapping. Codefendant Wembly was not wearing a mask, and one of the cars was registered to him. Officers arrested Wembly and searched his phone, which he had on him before, during, and after the kidnapping. A few weeks later, officers identified codefendant Brandt from surveillance footage. Brandt was a phone contact of Wembly's, and after officers arrested Brandt, they searched his phone. Brandt's text messages with Wembly identified codefendant Armand.

¶ 8 The driver and passenger both identified Armand. The driver identified Brandt, but the passenger did not.

¶ 9 Officers conducted a “tower dump” with three service providers at four locations. One phone pinged at all four locations at the pertinent times. That phone number belonged to Ford, who was a phone contact of Wembly’s. An open-source database listed Cheryl Bedford, who lived at the same address as Ford, as the owner of the phone number. A different open-source database listed Ford as the owner as of July 2018.

¶ 10 Surveillance footage from the morning of the crime shows a car, registered to Bedford, arriving at a gas station to pick up Wembly. A text message was sent from Wembly’s phone to Ford. Other surveillance footage shows two people, both of average height and large and muscular. One was Brandt. Officers believed the second man’s height and build fit Ford.

¶ 11 Pretrial Services gave Ford a four (out of six) for new criminal activity and a two (out of six) for failure to appear. If Ford was to be released before trial, Pretrial Services recommended supervision.

¶ 12 At the time of the alleged offense, Ford had seven felony convictions and four bail bond forfeitures with the most recent occurring in 1995. His convictions included armed robbery, two murders, three possessions of a controlled substance, and one distribution of a look-alike substance. He also had misdemeanor convictions for unlawful use of a weapon and escape. And Ford had a pending postconviction matter, challenging one of his murder convictions.

¶ 13 The defense proffered that Ford has not had any infractions since beginning mandatory supervised release in April 2023. He lived with his wife and worked two jobs. He supported his

grandmother, mother, and children and regularly attended church. He lives in the area where the crime occurred.

¶ 14 The circuit court found that the State carried its burden to detain Ford before trial.

¶ 15 First, the proof was evident and the presumption great that Ford committed both aggravated vehicular hijacking and kidnapping. Second, Ford posed a real and present threat to the victim and the community because “this level of criminality [was] just horrifying.” Third and finally, no condition of release could mitigate the harm Ford threatened, given his history of violent crime.

¶ 16 Ford moved for relief, arguing that new evidence from discovery undermined the State’s proof: (i) neither the driver nor the passenger identified Ford and (ii) the State had agreed to release codefendant Brandt on electronic monitoring.

¶ 17 In response, the State noted that its original proffer described Ford as masked, and that its agreement with Brandt was specific to Brandt and not based on evidence of Ford’s innocence. The State added that Ford had seven bail bond forfeitures, not four, and a conviction for attempt first degree murder in 1995 alongside codefendant Armand and three others.

¶ 18 The circuit court denied Ford’s motion.

¶ 19 Ford timely appealed and filed a notice in place of a memorandum, asserting he would rely on the contentions he made in his motion for relief. The State filed a memorandum in response.

¶ 20 Analysis

¶ 21 Ford argues the State failed to meet its burden to justify pretrial detention, an issue we review *de novo*. *People v. Morgan*, 2025 IL 130626, ¶ 51 (holding, *de novo* review proper when parties proceed by proffer).

¶ 22 The State charged Ford with aggravated vehicular hijacking and kidnapping, both detainable offenses. 725 ILCS 5/110-6.1(a)(1.5) (West 2026) (including as detainable offenses kidnapping and “any other felony which involves the threat of or infliction of great bodily harm or permanent disability or disfigurement”).

¶ 23 Under Illinois law, pretrial release is the default. 725 ILCS 5/110-2(a) (West 2026). A court may order detention when the State establishes, by clear and convincing evidence, that (i) the proof is evident or the presumption great that the defendant committed a detainable offense, (ii) the defendant poses a real and present threat to the safety of the community based on the specific, articulable facts of the case, and (iii) no combination of conditions can mitigate that threat. *Id.* § 110-6.1(e).

¶ 24 At the hearing, Ford introduced additional evidence. See *People v. Arrington*, 2026 IL App (4th) 260297, ¶ 15, *pet. for leave to appeal allowed*, No. 133409 (Aug. 11, 2026) (noting that either party may introduce additional evidence in connection with hearing on motion for relief). While he did not identify which elements he contested, his motion and arguments at the hearing appeared to contest each of the three elements under section 110-6.1(e).

¶ 25 On the first element, Ford contended that the driver’s and passenger’s failure of to identify him fatally undermines the State’s case. We disagree. As the State contends, “an abundance of evidence” places Ford in contact with the three codefendants at multiple places and times pertinent to the crimes. That evidence includes cell-tower locations, surveillance footage, registrations for a car, phone, and home, and shared criminal history with one of the codefendants. A circumstantial proffer can support a determination that the proof is evident, or the presumption is great, that Ford committed the offenses. *People v. Williams*, 2024 IL App (1st) 241013, ¶ 35.

¶ 26 Next, concerning dangerousness, Ford contended that the State’s agreement releasing Brandt on electronic monitoring showed that Ford posed no real threat. We disagree. As the circuit court noted, this is not just a “stolen car” case, the “level of criminality [was] * * * horrifying.” See 725 ILCS 5/110-6.1(g)(1) (dangerousness weighs whether alleged crime was violent and included weapon). Ford’s criminal history includes violent offenses. *Id.* § 110-6.1(g)(2)(A) (dangerousness weighs criminal history including violent offenses). And when these crimes occurred, Ford was on mandatory supervised release. *Id.* § 110-6.1(g)(8) (dangerousness weighs whether defendant was on mandatory supervised release). Ample evidence supported finding dangerousness. See *People v. Mancilla*, 2024 IL App (2d) 230505, ¶ 27 (finding of dangerousness supported by evidence of prior convictions for violent offenses, possession of firearms, accusations of pistol-whipping, robbing at gunpoint, threatening to kill, and stealing car).

¶ 27 Regarding the third element, threat mitigation, Ford again refers to Brandt’s release as supporting releasing him. We again disagree. As the State notes, the circuit court must make an individualized determination about release. 725 ILCS 5/110-6.1(f)(7) (“Decisions regarding release, conditions of release, and detention prior to trial must be individualized.”). Ford’s history of escape and bail bond forfeiture supported the court’s finding. See *People v. Hongo*, 2024 IL App (1st) 232482, ¶ 36 (“history of failing to abide by prior conditions of release placed upon [defendant], by possessing a weapon while prohibited from doing so, further suggests that continued detention is necessary to avoid the safety risk posed by defendant”).

¶ 28 Clear and convincing evidence supported the circuit court’s decision. *In re Tiffany W.*, 2012 IL App (1st) 102492-B, ¶ 12 (defining standard).

¶ 29 Affirmed.